

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning on Page 11, line 5, as follows:

Yet another benefit realized by the present invention is the ease in which an administrator establishes and enforces a consistent software platform over the client computers and network for which the administrator is responsible. For example, the current process that an administrator ensures a consistent software platform over client computers is generally the following: make a determination as to what the software platform is to be, i.e., which updates should be installed and which should not; determine the status of the software platforms on each client computer; and push the appropriate software updates down to the client computers for installation. Even after the initial effort, an administrator must frequently repeat the process in order to ensure that the software platform remains consistent. In contrast to these prior art approaches, by utilizing the update distribution system described above, as well as the infrastructure support for grouping of clients machines into different target groups and the ability to target different updates at different target groups (described below), an administrator can specify the desired state for software update installation of the networks and or client computers for which the administrator is responsible. An administrator specifies the desired state through an Administration API (also described below) for any number of client computers and/or groups of client computers. Once the desire update state is established/specified, the administrator can then rely on the update distribution system to enforce the distribution of the updates throughout the update distribution system. The update distribution system works to make sure that the clients in the system conform to the desired state dictated by the administrator. Through periodic actions, the update distribution system constantly tries to bring those client computers that do not conform with the desired state into conformance. Additionally, by associating specific installation attributes with the software updates, such as a mandatory installation attribute or a install-by deadline installation attribute, the update distribution system relieves the administrator of a substantial portion of the implementation details associated with maintaining a consistent software platform. A more detailed description of associating installation attributes with a software update to

control installation behaviors on a client computing device is set forth in copending and commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application No. 10/799,336, filed March 12, 2004, entitled "Controlling Installation Update Behaviors On a Client Computer," ~~filed March 12, 2004,~~ ~~attorney docket no. MSFT 1-22459,~~ which is incorporated herein by reference.

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